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A GIFT FROM JAPAN



SWORD GUARD, MADE BY KANEIYE

THE Museum has received a gift of three sword guards from a Japanese nobleman. Accompanying the gift was a letter a translation of which is here reproduced, not only as illustrating the kindly feeling of educated Japan for America, and the high esteem in which they hold their objects of art, but as a characteristic and interesting portraiture of the donor by himself.

"On July 29th in the 38th year of Meiji (1905), Prof. Bashford Dean, Curator of Arms and Armor of the New York Metropolitan Art Museum, together with Mr. Amagasa Isao, a student of law of the University of Kyoto, called at my residence in the latter city, and stated that he (Dean) had learned in Tokyo that I possessed a large collection of Japanese armor and arms and expressed his desire to be permitted to see them. I consented and thereupon brought out and exhibited to Prof. Dean various articles of armor, etc. Among the things shown were six *tsuba* made by Kaneiye. These he asked me to sell him, but I declined to do so. Then he requested me to sell him three of the number, but this also I declined doing.

Subsequently he called twice upon me and again on the evening of the 20th of October, 1905, when he requested me to loan the three *tsuba* for a period of five

years to be exhibited in the Museum for educational purposes. This, however, I also felt constrained to refuse, yet when I reflected over the persistent zeal exhibited I could but admire the same, and considering that the request was on behalf of an American institution, while unable to consent to receive any compensation, I determined to make an offering of the desired objects rather than exhibit them as requested, and I stated that such was my desire. To the inquiry thereupon made by Prof. Dean as to my motive in this act, I replied: That at the time of the Tokugawa Shogunate I was a military attendant and resided in Osaka at the Castle. When I was yet a child eight years of age Commodore Perry came to Uraga, Sagami, for the purpose of opening our ports to foreign trade and commerce. A promise to that effect having been obtained by him from the then government, from that time on until the present Meiji period our intercourse has spread far and wide with all foreign nations, and that our honored flag should float to-day over all the seas was largely due to the friendly offices of the American Republic. Again during the recent conflict between the Empire of Japan and that of Russia—thanks to the warm and friendly attitude of the President of the United States in his successful action in putting an end to that deadly conflict by bringing about the Peace Conference at Portsmouth, with results yet to follow though still unknown—I felt much gratitude for the many and valuable services rendered by America to my country. So therefore when Prof. Dean continued to express so great a desire for some of the objects in my treasured collection, I consented to part with the same and send them to the Art Museum of New York as an evidence of my warm personal regard for the American people.

Upon this, my statement to Mr. Dean, he was and expressed himself to be extremely gratified, and said that upon his return to America he would bring the same to the knowledge of his Government and that upon receipt of the necessary notification to be sent me by the

Governor of Kyoto after a request to that effect by the proper Japanese officials thereunto moved by a communication from the Embassy of the United States at Tokyo, I should forward the articles offered.

This was entirely satisfactory to me. Meanwhile as I was growing old and at any time I might be overtaken by death, I had the promise of those of my house-

the greatest repute. Both of these men flourished at the end of the fourteenth century. Kaneiye's works are held in the highest estimation by connoisseurs, not only because of their intrinsic value, but also because it was he who first practiced the art of inlaying the iron with the little lines of gold and silver, which produce the brilliant effect of these pictures in metal.

One of the sword-guards given by Mr.



SWORD GUARDS, MADE BY KANEIYE

hold surviving me to execute and fulfil my undertaking to the letter.

On the morning of 21st October, 1905, Prof. Dean left Kyoto and returned the following year to his country passing through India. I saw him off from the Kyoto station, bidding him farewell.

On the 26th of January of this year (1907) I received a communication from Ambassador Wright offering kindly to transmit through his office to America the three *tsuba* referred to herein."

(Signed) GODA MASA UJI
Samurai.

May, 1907

Japan, City of Kyoto.

The sword-guards were the work of the oldest and one of the most celebrated of Japanese workers, or chasers, in metal, Kaneiye of Fushimi, Yamashiro, after the designs of Kano Montonobou, a painter of

Goda represents a fisherman by the side of a cave, another shows us Fudosen and a willow tree, while on the third, perhaps the finest of them all, a kingfisher in a group of reeds is indicated with remarkable cleverness.

COPYING AND SKETCHING IN THE MUSEUM

IN the early part of 1906 greater advantages were offered to the copyists in all branches of art at the Museum. Not alone were the number of days allotted to them increased to five—they were formerly but two—but the restrictions as to the sizes of the copies were removed and students and professional artists are free to copy anything and everything belonging to the Museum in the size of the originals or in any size best suited to their needs. Prior to the adop-